

**JOHNSON FERRY/ABERNATHY ROAD
CAC MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2003
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Attendance:

GDOT Personnel:	Fulton County Public Works
Angela Alexander, GDOT Urban Design	Angela Parker
Nikki Henderson, GDOT OEL	
Albert Shelby, GDOT Urban Design	
Joe Palladi, GDOT Urban Design	Others:
	Nar Chaudhry
CAC Members	Ann Walraven
Roger Blitchfeldt, SSRI	JJG Personnel
Scott Dalton, Sandy Springs Christian Ch.	Sue Allison, Facilitator
Douglas Dewberry, SSBA	Marla Greene, Community Development
Ed Dolan, Abernathy Road Coalition	Alan Hunley- Transportation
Dan Dobry, Cobb DOT	Greg Ramsey, Transportation
David Hong, Cobb Co.(Com Sam Olens)	Harris Robinson, Transportation
Tom Kelly, Abernathy Road Coalition	Lisa Woods, Transportation
Gar Muse, SSRI	
Lynn Watson, Abernathy Road Coalition	Not Attending
Ross Perloe, sub for Lisa Hrabe	Adam Orkin, SSBA
Rob Simms, representing Mike Kenn	Mel Mobley, SSRI
Bill Snarr, Cobb County	Joe Gavalis, Cobb Co.
Tom Williams, Abernathy Road Coalition	Steve Modellmog, PTC
Yvonne Williams, Perimeter CID	George Smith, Sandy Springs C of N
Jerrie Woodward, Abernathy HOA	Kevin Cheri, NPS
Darrell Richardson, GDOT Urban Design	Lisa Hrabe, Riverside HOA
	Robert Trusty, SS Christian Church

Approved: _____

Ms. Sue Allison (JJG) opened the meeting by welcoming the CAC members and guests, and introducing herself as the new facilitator for the meeting. Sue explained that Brandi Alvarez has left JJG to accept a new position in Macon and Jeanne Hill is now a new mother and will not be resuming her position at JJG. After a brief update on the last meeting, the CAC reviewed the draft minutes from the October 8 and 22, 2002. In addition to reviewing the draft, the highlighted changes made at the request of the council members were also reviewed.

1. One CAC representative expressed that he did not want the free flowing lane to be considered as part of the decision.

The CAC then approved the minutes of October 8 and October 22, 2002.

Ms. Allison continued the meeting by reviewing the agenda and then discussing the items on the agenda in detail.

She first discussed the Public Information Summary (PIM). Comments were summarized and provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Some duplication was received. Ms. Allison discussed in detail the outcome of each comment submitted. (Copy of results is attached to these minutes).

On question 3 of the summary, a CAC member wanted to know what changed in the alignment? This issue was addressed by Mr. Greg Ramsey. **Mr. Ramsey stated that the alignment had been adjusted to prevent the loss of several homes in the area of the alignment.** This led to the question of whether this change had been discussed with anyone living in the neighborhood, as people were confused because the exhibits displayed one thing and the residents were told something different. Mr. Ramsey explained that it was a decision made by GDOT to display the alignment as it was shown at the PIM. Mr. Hong stated, concerning the PIM survey, that the display should have reflected the same information presented to the public. **Ms. Allison made a note of this and stated this would be done on future surveys.**

Mr. Tom Williams requested that GDOT investigate a left hand turn onto Burdett Drive from Johnson Ferry Road due to people accessing the parking lots for the Abernathy Park area. **Mr. Joe Palladi responded that placing a left hand turning lane would come at a great cost and many would be opposed to this action. Access to the parking lot can be done and this issue would be addressed specifically with the community residing in this area of the project.**

The CAC wanted to know how the residents located in the community will get to Johnson Ferry and how many homes are located in that subdivision? **Mr. Palladi stated**

there is an alternate route. Mr. Tom Williams stated there are approximately 50 - 60 homes located in the subdivision.

Ms. Allison discussed the statistics regarding question 4 about Wright Road and stated that the design is moving forward regarding the Cul-de-Sac due to the response received from the comments and surveys. Purchasing options are being explored.

Mr. T. Williams stated that the ARC web site discussed three different funding sources; however, he didn't see any of the designs for multi-purpose use. **Ms. Angela Alexander stated there would be a 20 ft grass raised median designed and no trees.**

Mr. Hong inquired as to whether small bushes might help to mitigate oncoming headlights, as trees would do for highways? **Mr. Palladi responded that the trees used could be crepe myrtles or something similar, but nothing will be used such as an oak tree or along the lines of an oak.**

A CAC member stated that SSRI has a maintenance contract with Fulton County. The County pays SSRI and, in turn, SSRI hires a third-party to perform maintenance; it doesn't appear to pose any problems.

A CAC member stated many residents in the neighborhood would like to see a cross-section for people in the community to use when traveling by foot and/or bike.

CAC members wanted to address the speed limit issue and inquired what design will be implemented to ensure the 35 mph speed limit would be adhered to? **Ms. Alexander and Mr. Albert Shelby addressed this question. Horizontal and vertical alignments will be designed for the 35 mph speed design. In addition to these types of alignments, there will be traffic signals along the road, which will also help deter traveling above 35 mph. Ms. Allison stated that other deterrents could include landscaping, medians, roadway markings and cross walks. Also, reducing the lane widths will have an affect on traffic speed.**

One CAC member stated that Abernathy Road already has most of the designs listed above and these designs do not enforce the speed limit. **Mr. Palladi compared the Abernathy Road design to Freedom Parkway and discussed how using horizontal and vertical alignments are not used as a means of speed-reduction . Mr. Palladi stated GDOT would not inflict additional curvature and grades into the design simply as a measure to control speed. Enforcement will be a joint effort between the neighborhoods, police officers and Fulton County. Mr. Palladi stated that according to the 2001 AASHTO Green Book, the controls for required length of vertical curves have changed from those used previously. The height of an object in the road is now 2.0 feet (previously 6 inches), which reduces the required lengths of**

vertical curves. He also stated that Abernathy Road is not appropriate for speed humps.

Mr. Hong stated that part of the solution to speed and safety is an educational issue. There are a number of articles that address this. He stated that he could e-mail some of these articles to Ms. Allison, which she would distribute in a packet along with other speed calming strategies.

Another CAC member expressed that there appears to be a great deal of frustration and sentiment that Cobb County is pushing forward with this project. It was stated that there is much collaboration between Cobb County and Fulton County. It was agreed that a message needs to be sent to the communities about this joint effort by both Cobb and Fulton Counties and that it needs to come from the leaders of those counties. A statement also needs to be made that this project is a regional issue and needs to be built. By constructing this project, it will aid in the prevention of accidents, loss of life, and declining economic development.

Ms. Angela Parker (Fulton County Public Works) gave an overview of the **Abernathy Road Parkway/Greenway and Bike/Pedestrian Issues**. Following is an outline of her presentation:

- Fulton County has retained JJG as a consultant, and it is expected that a contract will be signed within the next week.
- JJG is charged with "catching up" the Greenway Plan and coordinating construction with the Parkway Plan
- The Greenway will link to the Chattahoochee River
- The Greenway will include trails and bicycle paths

Funding:

- Cobb County has committed \$4 million towards the Greenway Plan
- The source of other funding has not been identified at this time
- The CAC members requested that until funding is determined, GDOT does not proceed with construction of the road (parkway). Mr. Palladi stated that the parkway could not be built until this project took place
- CAC members wanted to know whether there is a commitment to purchase the 44 properties on Abernathy Road. Mr. Palladi stated that it would be necessary for Fulton County to purchase the properties first, and then GDOT could purchase the ROW needed from the County.

Bikeway:

- On-road bikers are often referred to as “nuclear bikers.” Off-road bikers are generally considered to be casual bikers or children who ride at a much slower pace.
- Ms. Parker strongly recommends both on-road and off-road paths and cautioned there is a safety problem when mixing on-/off-road bikers

Mr. Greg Ramsey gave an overview of the **Concepts Revisions**. Following is an outline of his presentation:

- Any additional width will result in further impact to the adjacent properties
 - The median width will be 20 feet, allowing for left turns
 - There will be a 2-foot gutter and raised curbs in the design to allow for vehicles to perform safe U-turns and to provide for adequate drainage runoff
 - Pedestrians must be considered in the design, and there must be a refuge for pedestrians crossing the road. The more you reduce the widths, the less refuge you will have for pedestrians.
 - The U-turn bulb-outs were added to the design
 - The bike plan must be reviewed. There are many walls along Johnson Ferry, and sidewalks are butted against the property
 - If a wall is removed, HOAs are compensated
 - Sidewalk widths will affect the shoulder, which includes utilities and drainage
1. CAC members wanted to know if 20-foot width is the standard width for a median? **Mr. Ramsey said yes, but it is up to GDOT to make any decisions regarding median width.**
 2. Will the median be flexible? Can it be used for transit? **No, the median cannot be used for the transit system if turning lanes are part of the design**
 3. Mr. Gar Muse asked if the lane widths could be reduced from 12 feet to 11 feet to help reduce the speeding?
 4. Most residents don't want sidewalks/walls encroaching on their property. How does GDOT handle diminished value even if their property isn't purchased? **Mr. Palladi stated there is no compensation if the property is not disturbed or impacted by the project other than visual.**
 5. Can the design reduce the number of accidents? **Yes, the design could lower the accident rates by controlling conflicts and also allow room for regulatory signage such as U-turns, pedestrian crossing, etc. and would also create a more consistent flow**
 6. Mr. Ed Dolan stated he would like to submit 9 points that came from the median subcommittee meeting, to be entered and recorded in the study and suggested that there needs to be more meetings before the PIM is held.

Mr. Harris Robinson gave an overview of the **Affects of Traffic**. He presented the following:

- The AM/PM Peak Direction Slide was shown
 - An additional lane was added to the southbound lane on Johnson Ferry between Columns Drive and Riverside Drive
 - Additional median openings were added
1. CAC members wanted to know if the improvements would pertain only to the PM traffic? **Mr. Robinson stated that there would be an improvement to the overall traffic times**
 2. How will additional traffic coming down affect people at Riverside Drive? **Mr. Robinson stated there would be no additional traffic.**
 3. A CAC member pointed out that Burdette Dr. does not intersect with Abernathy Rd.
 4. Mr. Dolan asked if there will be charts available and if they could be sent to the CAC? He also requested that all 24-hour traffic be included in the presentation. He stated he has requested this information be included and that it has not been sent as of this date. Mr. Dolan wanted to know the number coming across the river. **Mr. Robinson stated this information had been included in previous packets; however, if Mr. Dolan would contact Ms. Allison, she would provide him with this information.**

After Mr. Robinson gave his overview, the CAC voted on recommendations for the following:

1. Recommendation on whether the design will consist of 4 or 6 lanes for Johnson Ferry Road?
 - **9 CAC members favored 4 lanes**
 - 6 CAC members favored 6 lanes
 - 2 CAC members abstained from voting
 - *****Bill Snarr abstained from all the votes**
2. Recommendation to reduce the lane width from 12 feet to 11 feet? The current width is 12 feet.
 - **10 CAC members favored reduction**
 - 4 CAC members opposed reduction
3. Recommendations on median widths at Johnson Ferry
 - **11 CAC members favored 16-foot medians**

- 3 CAC members favored 20-foot medians
4. Recommendation that there should be sidewalks and bike paths on both sides of the road without increasing the shoulder width more than 5 feet
 - **11 CAC members favored this recommendation**
 - 2 CAC members opposed this recommendation
 - 1 CAC member abstained from the vote
 5. A recommendation to remove right-turn lanes.
 - **8 CAC members favored removal**
 - 6 CAC members opposed removal
 6. A recommendation to have 4-foot bike lanes on both sides of the road .
 - **11 CAC members favored lanes on both sides**
 - 3 CAC members opposed lanes on both sides
 7. A recommendation on the shoulder width being 14 feet or 16 feet
 - **13 CAC members favored a 16-foot width**
 - 1 CAC member favored a 14-foot width
 8. A recommendation to maximize the buffer zone between the gutter and sidewalk to accommodate trees.
 - **13 CAC members favored maximizing the buffer**
 - 1 CAC members opposed maximizing the buffer

After consensus was reached on the typical sections, the meeting was adjourned. Ms. Allison announced the tentative date for the next PIM meeting.

<p>*Next PIM meeting: Tuesday, March 25, 2003 North Springs High School, 4744 Roswell Rd.</p>
